

Reading –10th Released

In William Shakespeare's The Tragedy of Julius Caesar, Marc Antony delivers a funeral oration to honor Caesar. Caesar had been murdered by a group of Roman citizens who believed that he had become too powerful. Read the scene below to learn about Marc Antony's oratory skills. Then answer the questions that follow.

The Tragedy of Julius Caesar Act III, Scene ii

ANTONY. Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me
your ears;

I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them,
The good is oft interrèd¹ with their bones;
So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious.
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Caesar answered² it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest
(For Brutus is an honorable man,
So are they all, all honorable men),
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me;
But Brutus says he was ambitious,
And Brutus is an honorable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome,
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill;
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept;
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff.
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honorable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal³
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And sure he is an honorable man.
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
But here I am to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once, not without cause;
What cause withholds you then to mourn for him?
O judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason! Bear with me;
My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,
And I must pause till it come back to me.

FIRST PLEBEIAN. Methinks there is much reason in
his sayings.

SECOND PLEBEIAN. If thou consider rightly of the
matter, Caesar has had great wrong.

THIRD PLEBEIAN. Has he, masters?
I fear there will a worse come in his place.

FOURTH PLEBEIAN. Marked ye his words? He
would not take the crown,
Therefore 'tis certain he was not ambitious.

FIRST PLEBEIAN. If it be found so, some will dear
abide it.⁴

SECOND PLEBEIAN. Poor soul, his eyes are red as
fire with weeping.

THIRD PLEBEIAN. There's not a nobler man in
Rome than Antony.

FOURTH PLEBEIAN. Now mark him, he begins
again to speak.

ANTONY. But yesterday the word of Caesar might
Have stood against the world; now lies he there,
And none so poor to⁵ do him reverence.
O masters! If I were disposed to stir
Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,
I should do Brutus wrong and Cassius wrong,
Who, you all know, are honorable men.
I will not do them wrong; I rather choose
To wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you,
Than I will wrong such honorable men.

¹ interrèd: buried

² answered: paid the penalty for

³ Lupercal: an ancient Roman festival celebrated
on Feb. 15

⁴ dear abide it: pay dearly for it

⁵ to: as to

Mark your answer choices for multiple-choice questions 1 through 4 in the spaces provided.

1. What purpose does repeating the phrase, “and Brutus is an honorable man,” serve in Marc Antony’s first speech?

- A. to raise doubt about whether Brutus is an honorable man**
- B. to emphasize that Marc Antony agrees with Brutus
- C. to express Marc Antony’s grief over Caesar’s death
- D. to praise Caesar’s life and accomplishments

This is a DOK 2 because it requires processing of text; the answer isn’t directly stated in the text. CCA 3.8

2. Which two persuasive techniques does Marc Antony use in his first speech?

- A. logical reasoning and name-calling
- B. emotional appeal and imitation
- C. circular reasoning and testimonial
- D. rhetorical questions and repetition**

This is a DOK 3 because students aren’t just identifying a persuasive technique. They have to determine what is persuasive by finding examples and then have knowledge of the techniques. It involves reasoning. CCA 3.8

3. Marc Antony’s words, “my heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,” are an example of

- A. inferred meaning.
- B. literal meaning.
- C. figurative language.**
- D. colloquial language.

This is a Level 2 because it requires some analysis and comprehension of text. CCA 1.1

4. The **main** purpose of the dialogue between the plebeians is to

- A. keep the crowd’s attention.
- B. raise doubts about why Caesar was murdered.**
- C. prove Brutus was an honorable man.
- D. express satisfaction with the new leadership.

This is a Level 2 because students have to understand author's purpose.
CCA 3.2

Open Response

Marc Antony uses evidence to convince the crowd that Caesar was not ambitious.

- a. Identify **three** examples of the evidence that Marc Antony uses to support his claim that Caesar was not ambitious.
- b. Explain why these examples are effective support for his claim.

This is a Level 3 because students have to evaluate Anthony's use of evidence in the speech. CCA 3.7